

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

November 21, 2022
OTHERS PRESENT

Rick McVey, Chairman
David Owen, Vice Chair
John Dickerson
Nathaniel Hall
Jeremiah Jefferies
Steve Oestreicher
H. Vernon Massengill

Bryan Miller, County Manager
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager
Brian Ferrell, County Attorney (Joined Remote)

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, November 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Historic Courthouse.

WELCOME:

Chairman McVey called the meeting to order. Then all paused for a moment of Silent Prayer, and the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was one public comment received by email and it has been distributed to the Board.

David Norris: Former IT Director residing at 1892 NC Highway 119 N, Leasburg, NC. During the commissioner's meeting on November 7 the county manager stated that I was involved with the loading of the chart of accounts into MUNIS. This is incorrect. The previous Finance Director worked directly with Tyler Tech staff. The chart of accounts was entered manually into the new financial system. Thank you.

RECOGNITIONS:

David Owen: I just want to thank all those that had a hand in the Christmas decorations that are going up.

AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chairman McVey said gentlemen we need to amend the agenda in several places. Under discussion items, we will need to move the Emergency Services Salaries for discussion, and we will add the Board of Elections Restroom Facilities under that for discussion. On action items, we need to add the Animal Protection Society. Then Mr. Hall has some things for Commissioner Comments. He has some reports he wants to go over with us. We will also add a closed session to the meeting.

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A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Hall and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda as amended. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. November 7, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

CASWELL FUND UPDATE ON HEATING ASSISTANCE:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, we have with us our Senior Center Director, Jeannine Everidge, and she'll lead the discussion for the Caswell Fund update on heating assistance. Mrs. Everidge said good evening Commissioners. I wanted to share, what I believe was in your agenda packets, the information in regards to heating assistance that the Caswell Fund provided last year and in the beginning of this year. Between the Caswell Fund and the Caswell Parish, we received \$46,000. We received \$7,500 through Duke Energy, and we received \$9,500 from the Town of Milton. As you can see noted at the bottom, also let me just kind of recap. When we decided as a committee of the Caswell Fund, there was a cap on those dollars, which was \$500. So if they reach their \$500, that was all that they got. Now some folks did not need that much in order to cover their electric bill or possibly their fuel bill, so we capped it at \$500. We had approximately \$63,000 total that we were able to use to assist. Now the Caswell Fund assisted 190 folks under Duke Energy, Piedmont Electric and the heating fuel applications. We paid 11 rental or mortgage applications. I also talked to Nell Page who is here this evening with me from the Caswell Parish. They have helped 46 households. They have done 21 electric non-fuel for heat, one water, two they assisted with wood for heating, and then they have done 13 for rent. I believe they have spent all of the funds with the exception of 47 cents as Nell has just told me. So that's just to say, this is what we paid out the end of last year and the beginning of this year just to assist those folks that were in need of help to cover their electric bills and so on. Then Mrs. Everidge asked the County Manager if he had anything to add. County Manager Miller apologized because he was checking on the noises outside. Mr. Miller asked Mrs. Everidge if she went over all the numbers and the costs associated with those numbers? Mrs. Everidge said yes and then County Manager Miller said Commissioners, it's no surprise to anyone that during the winter we have a lot of people in the need here in Caswell. We have a lot of older homes.

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Commissioner Massengill said we got a big fire, and that's what's probably kicking everything off. They were checking on the noise outside, and trying to figure out who's truck alarm was going off.

County Manager Miller started back by saying so we do have a lot of older homes with drafty windows, doors that aren't sealed properly, so on and so forth that cause heating bills to go much higher in some of the older homes than we would normally expect to see. Jeannine and I spoke briefly right before the meeting and we think this has some impact on the number of people that we see every year that need help that we serve. So I'm happy to report tonight to the Board and Jeannine will go over this. Then Mr. Miller asked Jeannine Everidge to go over that.

Mrs. Everidge said so we're kind of going to jump. I mentioned it in the last meeting that I had applied for a grant which was a Supportive Services for Housing and Home Modifications. It's a \$75,000 grant for two years. It will extend, actually it started in September, but they extended this particular grant out because they still had some funds left. It will go to September 30th of 2024. Those services are funds that are available to help, of course, senior adults who are 60 and older. The grant does have caps on certain things, but it is to help with installing door knobs, reliable locks, key deadbolts, windows fitted with reliable locks, smoke detectors, and any carbon monoxide detectors installed if local fire departments do not do that. It also would do minor home repairs such as primary bathroom repairs such as sink, tub, shower or commode, kitchen sink repairs, doorway widening, broken doors or window repairs or replaced, shingles and roofing felt replaced, and that's limited of course, and the floor, ceiling, or wall repair. There are some mobility improvements which would be grab bars. We will also be able to build ramps, and right now I've got six that are sitting on the waiting list to get started on. It will also repair steps. It also will do basic household furnishings and inoperable home appliances such as stove, hot water heater, refrigerator, washing machine, and heating and cooling units. And again these are capped, but we will be working with businesses that are in Caswell County first and/or volunteers to help us do that. So that is part of what we'll be looking to do once the Board has approved this. Then we'll be able to move forward and start working. I have two individuals right now that are in need. One lady is in need of a lot of repairs to the home that she lives in. So we'll probably have to look at that and discuss with her what she feels like is the most pressing issue that she has. She also is raising her great niece, who is a teenager. So I know she does have a need. I also have a senior adult who is in need, who has a leak in her ceiling which is causing some floor issues and also some water issues. So I have those two at the moment, but we hope that maybe with this funding that we'll be able to help in some way with some of the heating issues that some of these folks have. As Bryan Miller noted, a lot of our senior adults are living in the same home that they may have grown up in with their parents. A lot of these homes do not have new doors or new windows, and they are very drafty. We are also working with a couple of individuals who are willing to cut wood and bring it so that we have it at the center in the event that somebody comes to me or to the Senior Center in need of wood to help heat their homes. Most of you know a lot of our senior adults, and they don't get a lot of Social Security. A lot of

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them are \$800 to \$900 a month. If they've got to put that out to pay for a full tank of fuel to heat their home, then they're kind of stuck. They don't have any money to pay the rest of their utilities. They don't have money to buy groceries and things of that nature. So we're just trying to figure out a way that maybe we can help them in that capacity.

County Manager Miller said so Commissioners, we're happy to answer any questions you may have about the numbers or about the program in general. I think we mentioned this at the last meeting we had. When we have an application and money is awarded to one of these applications, we pay the provider individually not the individual making application. So we would pay the heating bill to Duke, Piedmont Electric, Thomas Brothers, or whomever. We pay it directly to them. So we're happy to answer any questions you have.

Commissioner Dickerson said there was a lot of noise going on. I didn't quite catch it all. How much money did the county give to the outfit last year? County Manager Miller said so they gave \$36,000 to the Caswell Fund and \$10,000 to the Caswell Parish. That's what the county gave. It was supplemented by \$9,500 from the Town of Milton and I think it was \$7,500 from Duke Energy.

Chairman McVey asked how much money do you have now? Jeannine Everidge said I don't have any. All of that money for the Caswell Fund is spent. The Caswell Parish, Nell Page just told me, has 47 cents left out of her allotment from the county. So all of the funding has actually been spent earlier in the year.

Commissioner Dickerson asked where did those expenditures go since the weather hasn't gotten cold? Jeannine Everidge said well this was earlier. This was last winter when we received the money. So it was during the winter time from 2021 into 2022 when we did that. So we were in the middle of winter at that point in time.

Chairman McVey asked if there were any more questions? Then Chairman McVey asked how much would Mrs. Everidge like to have from the Board? Jeannine Everidge said it would be nice to have at least the \$40,000 because once folks know that we have the funds; we literally have a revolving door. As Bryan Miller said we do not pay that money directly to the individual, but we pay whoever the bill goes to such as Duke Energy, Piedmont Electric, or Thomas Oil. We pay directly to them, and the individuals do not get the funds. We make sure that it's paid, and it is a one-time situation.

Commissioner Massengill said at the last meeting you said Duke Energy gave you. Then Commissioner Jefferies said once the work is completed, do you have it inspected after the people are done at a site? Jeannine Everidge said as far as the new grant, the \$75,00, that's something we'll have to work out Mr. Jefferies. I don't have that particular information just yet, but we will probably work with Building Inspections to see what we need to do with that. Commissioner Jefferies said we had this happen before, and they didn't do the work. They got paid though. We need to check behind them to be sure that the work is being done. County

Manager Miller said and we can also work with our Section 8 Housing inspector to inspect these houses, as well as Building Inspections.

Commissioner Massengill said you said last meeting that Duke Energy gave you how much? Jeannine Everidge said \$7,500 Then Commissioner Massengill said they gave you how much this year? Jeannine Everidge said well excuse me let me back that up. It was \$5,000 last year, and then it was \$2,500 this year. So a total of \$7,500. Commissioner Massengill asked if Piedmont Electric gave you anything, and Mrs. Everidge said no. Mr. Massengill asked if it had been requested? Mrs. Everidge said no, and then asked Nell Page if they had made any requests of Piedmont Electric? Nell Page said they don't make grants per se. They do have a fund, but I can't think of the name of it. We can sometimes get them to help the client because we are limited just like you are as to how much help we can give. So sometimes we will call Piedmont Electric just to see what they can offer compared to others. But they don't really give grants. The thing about the Duke Energy grant is that it can only be used for Duke customers, not Duke Progress, not Piedmont Electric, not any heating, oil, or gas or anything. It can just be used for Duke Energy customers. It is very limited. Then Commissioner Massengill asked how many Duke Power customers do we have in the county versus Duke Energy? Can we ask for Duke Power plus Duke Energy? Duke Energy and Duke are two different entities. Nell Page said yes they are. Commissioner Massengill said so if you gave us \$5,000 last year, did both come from Duke Energy? Mrs. Everidge said yes, both came from Duke Energy. Commissioner Massengill said so number one, why did they cut it? Number two, could we not ask Duke, just the Duke part for a request? Mrs. Everidge said yes sir. Nell Page said this this Duke Energy grant, it came from the old Share the Wealth Program. That came from the electricity bill that you were asking for a little extra in, and that was the money that was used to help people who needed the assistance. That is now known as Share the Light, but I still think it comes partially from these contributions that are made from customers. It is only to Duke Energy. I don't know the split in the county between the two Dukes, but Duke Progress is what was CP&L.

Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Miller could you shed some light on why we're having so many additional requests that were not included in the budget the first time around. This is going down a slippery slope. This is a good outfit to requester this money now, but it's one of many that has come before this Board, which is eventually going to lead to a tax increase if we keep doing this. County Manager Miller said yes, I'm happy to do that. Thank you Commissioner Dickerson. What I'll say is last year and the previous year, there were plentiful COVID funds available to be able to make these kind of grants to organizations. I am a little concerned at this point in time about our ability and the local government's ability to continue doing these type of things. I'm concerned that organizations may come to rely on this funding, and we're not going to have this funding under our current structural, i.e. the tax rate, to provide to them on a yearly basis like we have in the past. So moving forward I think the Board is got to be very strategic about how it goes about making these kinds of appropriations. Did I answer your question?

Commissioner Dickerson said close enough. Chairman McVey asked if there were any more questions? If not, we'll move on.

Jeannine Everidge said I do need to just say one thing. The grant, the Home Modification, I do need that approve by the Commissioners. Chairman McVey said we've got you on the agenda under action items. Mrs. Everidge said thanks. But I just want to let you all know since we discussed the grant for the driver for Meals on Wheels, that was sent into PTRC, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, last week. I believe they will start letting folks know about that early December. County Manager Miller said and as soon as we hear back on the outcome of that grant application, we'll come back before the Board let the Board know our recommendations for moving forward with additional drivers or strategies for Meals on Wheels.

Commissioner Hall asked how much did we request from PTRC? Jeannine Everidge said it was \$56,000. The first year, I did one driver. The second year, I actually added a second driver in the event that we had built up. By the end of that, I hope to have funding one way or another so that we can keep that driver.

EMERGENCY SERVICES SALARIES:

County Manager Miller asked the directors of Emergency Services to move closer to the front so they could speak. Then he said Commissioners, first you'll remember the Board approved the iteration of a salary study we had completed during the budget cycle, which was extremely beneficial to employees. What we noticed since and if you'll remember you approved 90% of the recommended salary for employees or a 7% increase whichever was greater at that time. That was one of the caveats. There were a couple other minor points, but for most employees it was 90% of the recommended salary or 7% whichever was greater. So what we've noticed over the last six months, since budget time, is many jurisdictions around Caswell: Alamance, Person, Rockingham, Guilford, Orange and even Wake County, which we'll never be able to compete with Wake County, but a lot of these jurisdictions have started increasing their rates of pay, especially for Emergency Services at an alarming rate to me. This is alarming because it leaves us with employees that are in some cases leaving and us not being able to recruit just applicants for our programs. So we have the Director of Emergency Management or EMS, the Director of 9-1-1, and we have the Sheriff with us tonight to talk a little bit about their plight and recruiting and retention.

Barry Lynch said thank you Commissioners. Right now I have 28 full time employees that are on payroll. I have three positions that are not filled, and I have one position that the medic has been out on worker comp for about 14 months. So that is putting us at a critical point right now. If I lose one or two more people, it's going to push us over the threshold of being at the critical level. I also have two employees that have their 30 years in, and they could come tomorrow and say I'm retiring and I'm done. With that being said, it has caused us the shortage and the boundless positions. It has caused us to have to park our fourth peak truck that was approved year before last. So we go down frequently to three trucks. If we do have a fourth truck, it's because full-time

people sign up to work, and we're having to pay time and a half for that position. We, Jason and myself, have been to the local EMT classes and the paramedic class at PCC, RCC, and Durham Tech trying to recruit people to come here. Currently with the three positions we have open, we have zero applications for full-time positions. We did offer a medic a full-time job about three weeks ago, but he turned it down because of the salary. He said he couldn't come to work for that amount of money. The rapid increase for salaries in the EMS profession is great. I never thought that I would see salaries for EMS at the level they are, but the problem is they were being driven by the bigger counties like Durham and Guilford. There's one county in North Carolina that is putting it on social media and sending it out. I got a postcard from out west, and their starting salary for a medic with no experience is \$74,000 a year. We can't compete with that. I wouldn't want to compete with that. We have two employees that have not officially said that they are looking or that they are leaving, but they are considering going somewhere else to a bigger service. If they did that, they would be getting about a six dollar an hour raise. I can't fault them for that. Are we trying to do everything we can to keep them? Yes, but they've got to do what's best for them and their family. It doesn't matter what Jason or myself do, Bryan, you Commissioners to make EMS the best service that we could possibly be. You're going to have a percentage of employees that are going to chase the dollar. And most of the time, it's the younger employees that we have that are not worried about their retirement or whatever that are going to chase that dollar. It hurts us in the long run. Apparently there is a shortage of paramedics. I talk to one of the training officers from Forsyth County, and they have 45 openings right now. They're going from having 22 ambulances on the road to 13 ambulances on the road, and they're doing some stuff that I cringed when he told us. But with the shortage, we have to be able to compete in some way. If our salary is not, I'm not saying we need to be paying \$28 an hour like some of these, but we've got to be competitive with the salaries in our immediate area. Right now we are the lowest in the area. So I have no way to bargain or try to get employees. Are there any questions?

Commissioner Massengill said just a question for you, and you may not know the exacts. But I did some calling today. Alamance is starting their EMTs basic at \$17. Person is starting their's at \$17.57 and incremental increases up to \$22.40. Rockingham is \$17.51. Are those three salaries correct? Barry Lynch said yes. Commissioner Massengill said and we're starting ours at \$14.79. Mr. Lynch said yes.

Commissioner Owen said you may not know this or answer to this. But do you know off the top of your head, how many of our employees are county-based or living here in Caswell? Mr. Lynch said I don't know exactly but I would say around probably 30-40%. I think Jason's counting up everything. Commissioner Owen said you don't have to be exact; I just think it points to a bigger issue. Jason said almost 50%. Commissioner Owen said it probably points to a bigger problem the county has that's never been addressed.

Commissioner Hall asked do we bill Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurances when we have to do with these EMS stops and pick-ups? Mr. Lynch said yes sir we bill Medicare, Medicaid, and

private insurance. Last year was the largest collection that we've ever had in county. We were really close to \$1.3 million that we collected last year in billing. Commissioner Hall then asked do we ever have to go to boy scout camp or to the game lands to pick up someone and take them to the hospital or get them treated. Mr. Lynch said yes sir. Commissioner Hall asked who do we bill for that? Mr. Lynch said the patient. It's not through the Scout camp; it's whoever the patient is. They are the one that gets billed. Commissioner Hall said okay. What is the average payment records? Mr. Lynch said it actually changes by the month. I don't know. It doesn't make sense, but our average bill or reimbursement for transport is roughly on the average about \$280 to \$290 per transport. That's the money collected not the money billed. Commissioner Hall said okay, I'm just thinking about the percentage of those folks that actually pay. Mr. Lynch said I don't know the exact percentage as far as patients that pay and those that don't pay. Like Medicaid patients, we only get a certain amount. If we bill \$450, we may get a \$100 from Medicaid, and we can't bill for anything above. Medicare depending on whether they have supplemental insurance to support or not. Commissioner Hall said we're just talking about the average. Most of these, if we have to go to the Cherokee Scout on the game land, chances are they are not going to be Medicaid or Medicare. I just want to know the average that pays. 1%, 50%, or 100%? Mr. Lynch said I don't know for sure sir. I don't want to tell you a figure that's not correct. I don't know the exact number as far as how many private pay individuals we have versus insurance. Commissioner Hall said so no one has any idea? Mr. Lynch said I can get it, but I don't have it now. I wasn't prepared for that tonight.

Commissioner Dickerson asked how much is uncollected that the county is owed overall for the population that you had picked up and taken to the hospital? Mr. Lynch said uncollected debt range pretty close to \$200,000. Commissioner Dickerson said I know that we talked about this one time before. What is being done to bring that figure down? What could be done better? Mr. Lynch said put in a third-party collections team. You're looking at about any 15 to 20% collection rate of what the bad debt is, but that's the only other option. We do debt setoff, and last year was about roughly \$20,000 I think collected from debt setoff. We send those letters out every November. So if someone hasn't paid and they get a lottery winning or their state income tax check, they don't get it. We get it. Commissioner Dickerson said that's good, but I think we ought to be looking at that third party collections to ramp up what we're owed. I mean if people take advantage of the service, they should have to pay for it. Mr. Lynch said I've presented that three times sir, and it's never passed. Commissioner Dickerson said that's something that really needs to be looked at hard.

Chairman McVey said didn't we have a collection agency at one time? Mr. Lynch said all of our billing is done through EMS MC, which they work the claim for us. The contract says 120 days, but they actually work it a lot longer than that. Anything that's not collected at that point is transferred over to bad debt at that point. Commissioner Dickerson said well gentlemen, what has to be done. I'm one of the newer members on the Board, but how do we start the process of getting a collection agency to help us collect what's owed the county. County Manager Miller

said well basically we put it out to bid. We get quotes from three or four different vendors, and we'll bring the quotes back to you, if that's what the Board would like us to do. Mr. Owen said I believe if I'm not mistaken the times that we've done it, what we found out is it costs more to hire the company than we get back, which makes no sense to go to a third party collection if we're not going to collect enough. Commissioner Dickerson said could we do this on a percentage of what they bring in. Mr. Lynch said I don't know the selection, depending on the age of the debt, runs anywhere from 20 to 50%. County Manager Miller said of what's collected. MR. Lynch said correct. County Manager Miller said and we said we would usually see about 20% of the bad debt collected. So on \$200,000, that's \$40,000 in bad debt collected. Then we would pay 20% in fees to the collection agency of the \$40,000. Mr. Lynch said that is correct. Commissioner Massengill said from experience, anything over 120 days you're just not going to get it. County Manager Miller said so just going by the average numbers, if you had \$200,000 in bad debt, you would recover after fees and everything about \$32,000. Commissioner Dickerson said well what have you got to lose in the county by putting it out in to bid and seeing if we can get someone in here for the bad debt. If you do not figure we're going to be able to collect it anyway, part of something's better than nothing. We're looking for a revenue source. I agree with you 100%. I mean, we presented it to the Board three times. Commissioner Dickerson asked what do you gentlemen think? Commissioner Massengill said but what is that going to do for today? What if a paramedic quits? Commissioner Dickerson said it's going to help us because whatever we do today will help these people, but it's going to actually hurt the taxpayer's pockets because somebody's got to pay for it. Commissioner Massengill said what are we going to do for today's issue with these three gentlemen right here. Are we going to wait for the bids to come in or are we going to try to do something else? If we get to the point where if Mr. Everett only has one dispatcher and John Q citizen calls and says I've just had a shooting. Hold on just a minute, I'm on with someone else. Is that what this Board wants? Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Massengill I don't know where you're taking this off on the tangent. Mr. Massengill said it's the reality. Commissioner Dickerson said I'm telling you we will deal with the gentlemen's request today. Commissioner Massengill said I don't disagree with the collection part of it, but the collection part's not going to solve what these guys need today.

Then County Manager Miller said Commissioners, we have two more agencies with us tonight. We have our 9-1-1 Director, Kenneth Everett. Would you like to say a few words about where you're at and what challenges you face? Mr. Everett said thank you, County Manager, Chairman, and Commissioners for the time to be here tonight. Mr. Lynch has covered several things, but if you go to your phone or computer and punch into Google 9-1-1 or Emergency Services shortage, you will get multiple links for all agencies across the state. On July 18th Durham County 911 employees were leaving it four times the rate of other counties. September the 30th was Buncombe County, a call center in the mountains, is not immune to staffing shortages. October the 4th was Guilford County facing staffing shortage with 19 vacancies. That's Guilford County. This is a national problem, and a national problem that has to do with Emergency Services not just 911 but also EMS and the Sheriff's office and the fire services. Nothing that we are immune

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to here in Caswell. Our staffing shortages have been experienced for the last two years. The timing of COVID and the complete interworkings of a pandemic has certainly increased the overall strain of all of Emergency Services. Our employees are leaving for one better pay, and two for controlled hours. When I say controlled hours, I mean there are no weekends, no holidays, and they don't want to do night shifts all the time. And here we don't offer a night shift premium or a weekend premium. We're kind of set at a daytime rate and the nighttime rate. That can be a problem because one of the things we see across the state today is other agencies are not only raising salaries, but they're also adding shift differential. Those are a couple things that we don't have. Burnt out for the profession is the reality. It's not something we think, but it's a reality. The staggering and mandatory overtime to cover vital positions have become a destructive effect to all of us. Behavioral impacts for the profession are real from physical, mental, and social well-being. Our employees across the state have left in record numbers. Right now if you call any educational institute that does anything from law, EMS, or 911 training, they've saw a 60% decrease in applicants that have applied for any type of education, which makes it even more difficult for a small county to recruit somebody when your education facilities don't have the students in the seat to train them. Recruiting for telecommunicators is almost impossible. We have the most recent hiring process. I spent days trying to get somebody from the county to apply, not only the ones that are on the outside but the ones that are inside the county. I went several different places. We had a trained lady that applied for a job. She was from Alamance County. She put in that she wanted a different call pace and a more relaxed environment. She got the job. She called three days before starting and backed out. She took a job with Orange County for money and better controlled hours which caused her to completely get out of the 911 industry altogether. We had spent multiple other weeks going to different businesses such as Food Lion, Family Dollar, Dollar General, talking to people that work here and that live here. We were trying to get them to apply, especially the ones that had great customer service. I spoke with a young lady about putting in an application. Her first question was what do you pay? I told her I had no idea, and it completely blew me away that a lady that works at the Family Dollar in her position was making several thousand dollars more. It was almost \$44,000 compared to what we make here in the county. There was no way she could apply. I had no idea. It was completely mind-blowing for me. So recruiting has been really difficult for us all, even on our part-time staff and our full-time staff. So we're limited on who we can put in the seat for the next vacancies. Half of our staff lives in the county, and have of our staff lives outside the county. We have communicators that have a year experience all the way to 20 years of experience. We want to keep every one of them in their seat, and we want to make sure that they do the job that they've continued to do that has amazed everybody. We have to commend the staff that I have today. In the last year compared from 2021 to 2022, our call volume right now has gone up 1700 calls being processed in our 911 Center. The year before that was about a thousand less. So every day what happens? Our call numbers continue to rise. Our staff right now answers calls 98% of the time in less than 10 seconds which is amazing and sets records across the state for our staff to be only two and take care of all of our agencies. I can't

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thank them enough for staying here. A lot of them could choose to go other places to get a job and make a lot more money, but they have a heart and a dedication for Caswell County and its people. They want to see us prosper. Thank you.

Then Sheriff, Tony Durden, came up. Good Evening Commissioners. Well I don't have a formal statement, but I come here to ask or respectfully requests that we look into the salaries that we are having problems of recruitment and retention for in EMs workers, 9-1-1, and Sheriff's Office. I don't know why they're leaving. They're not just going to other agencies to work, they're going any and everywhere. We have six openings in the Sheriff's Office and four openings on the Detention side. We need people. I have friends that laugh at me because I go to the Food Lion every day trying to recruit people to come work at the Caswell County Sheriff's Office I go to Dollar General and Family Dollar and try to tell people how great it is to work for Caswell County. It is a great place. But if you can make as much money somewhere else, that's not as inherently dangerous, that you have to put rival plate on, that you have may have someone throw feces on you, maybe you might take that job. I don't blame you. We may not can compete with Orange County or Alamance County, but I asked that the Commissioners with the help of the County Manager and Finance Director, if we can, look into some way that we can better serve our community by retaining and recruiting top-notch folk because everyone's in competition to receive the best and the brightest. At UNC, they're not just trying to get anybody; they want the best and the brightest. So Caswell County, we should want the best and the brightest. We shouldn't just settle for what we can get. Now these young men that went before me, they came out with some great numbers and statistics. I have numbers. If you want to see some numbers, I got them. We're the lowest paid in the area. Person County makes \$209 more than us. Elon makes \$5,000 more than us starting off. Gibsonville makes \$3,000 more than us starting off. Pennsylvania County makes \$5,000 more than we do, and Reidsville makes \$2,000 more. So when I say that money is 10% - 15%, I don't know what we can do. But we should just look into it make sure that we try to do something. I keep crying Chicken Little telling people the sky is falling with this casino coming, but no one wants to listen. But understand, water will come into the canoe someday. Do not let water come in through Caswell County because it's going to find the weakest spot. Let it not be Caswell County. I'll answer any questions you have.

County Manager Miller said one thing that I think is that none of the folks that you've heard from Emergency Service tonight has addressed is the onboarding process. Sheriff, how long does it take to onboard somebody and get them to where they can go out. Sheriff Durden said now we expedited it in Caswell County. Now we'll get you from cradle to grave meaning from front door to the back door in about six months. That's expediting background. That's if everything goes expeditiously, meaning that everything goes right down the line. But the problem you have is if you're 21 and they live with your mother and father in Caswell County on Hodges Dairy Road, I can pretty much do your background check in six months. But if you were in the military, and you were stationed in Germany, and then Colorado, and New York City, it's probably going to take me nine months to get you in this job because we have to check every address that you lived

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at in your last 10 years. we have to check all your references, and we have to check this and that. Everybody can't be a deputy or a detention officer because if you have a slight credit hiccup, you might not get hired. You may have told somebody not to go to heaven one day and you got to charge, you may not get a job. So we're not looking for perfect people, but we trying to get as close as we possibly can.

Chairman McVey said Mr. Miller, what kind of money are we looking for the total project to bring Emergency Services up? Mr. Miller said not to be vague, but it depends. It depends what the priorities of this Board is. If the priorities that the Board would love to be the highest paid jurisdiction around, it's one figure. If the Board wants us to be competitive, it's another figure. If the Board wants us to be close enough to where we don't have people leaving, it's a different figure. So we need to know what the priorities of the Board are before we set that number. Now I've done some rough numbers, and based on the rough numbers that I have to address this for Emergency Services and to bring Emergency Services up to the level they should be, you're probably looking at about \$1,264,731 a year. Commissioner Massengill asked which of those three did you just give us figures on? I hope it was the high one. County Manager Miller said that's not going to be the highest paid jurisdiction around. That'll get us on the level playing field with the other jurisdictions. Commissioner Oestreicher said would you call that competitive? Is that what you're saying? Mr. Miller said that's competitive. Commissioner Massengill said Sheriff Durden, am I correct that your officers start out at about \$37,000 give or take? Sheriff Durden said \$37,800. Then Commissioner Massengill asked did you hear that the Burlington City Council voted to start their Police Department out at \$55,000? Sheriff Durden said yes, but you going to earn that \$55,000, and Commissioner Massengill said I know you're going to earn it. They shoot straight over in Burlington. We've still got to get up there a little better than \$37,000 versus \$55,000. Sheriff Durden said it will take a little less to work for me.

Commissioner Dickerson said what does that figure bring it to? You said it makes it competitive. For example, what does it do for the average EMS starting pay or the average Sheriff's Department starting pay? How much does it increase it? It increases, I didn't break this down to an hourly rate or wage. For an EMT paramedic, that would move our EMT paramedic salary up to around about \$26 dollars an hour. Commissioner Massengill said is that the paramedic or the EMT? Mr. Miller said the paramedic. Commissioner Massengill said okay. Then our surrounding counties are only \$21 or \$22 for a paramedic. Mr. Miller said so paramedics are a little bit different in the way that Rockingham, Person, and Alamance treat their paramedics. If you get a paramedic that's straight off the street or fresh out of school; Barry, you want to help me with this a little bit. You get a paramedic that's right out of school, they have a base rate, and then with their experience, their salary increases throughout the range. I've presented this to the Board too. The pay and grade system. Commissioner Massengill said yes it's \$22 to \$25 in Alamance County, and it's \$21.35 to \$27 in Person. Barry Lynch said there's a very good possibility in the really, really near future that Alamance is going to \$28. I don't know that for sure, but that's what the talk is right now that they're going to \$28. The salary ranges for Person and for Alamance is because they give you increases based on years of service, which currently

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we don't have. Ours is just one straight flat rate whether you have 30 years or three years of service. It's the same rate.

Commissioner Massengill said Mr. Manager, I won't be here and won't vote on it, but would you come back to the new Board with, just rough math, a 12% increase, which would get us almost to the level that the other counties are and hopefully not put our Emergency Services in the Jeopardy that I fear could happen? Mr. Miller said we can. Chairman McVey said we need to set up a work session on this with the new Board. County Manager Miller said I'm happy to do that. Chairman McVey asked what's the pleasure of the Board. Commissioner Dickerson said I think that would be a good idea, but I have one more thought that I'd like to throw out there. This is like the tip of the surface. All these gentlemen in here talking about the plight of their departments, we have a lot of other county employees. If it's done for this group, it's going to be done for the rest of them. They're going to want it eventually, if they hadn't already asked, and I don't blame them. What are the Board's plans to deal with that as it comes to pass? County Manager Miller said well what we've seen in the past is, and you're exactly right, when we see increases given to one group of people, then it creates morale issues throughout the rest of the organization because it seemed that some jobs are considered more important and others. So I think you're right. At some point I think the Board is going to have to address this, as Commissioner Hall has pointed out multiple times, holistically. The Board's going to have to look at everything and make some decisions based on your employee base. There are ways of doing this where the Board deals with this one time and then every four years thereafter. You're not having these recurring problems because the increases are built in. These are based off seniority and years of service and so forth. I'm happy to bring a plan back before the Board that looks like that too, but I think Commissioners McVey and Jefferies are right in that we probably should have a work session to address this. Chairman McVey said how about setting that up. County Manager Miller said okay. When would you like to do that? Chairman McVey said as soon as we can one afternoon after the new members are sworn in. I would wait until they're sworn in. Mr. Miller said okay. After some discussion the Board requested that this meeting be in the evening. Commissioner Hall said one quick question. The million and some dollars that you mentioned, does that cover all three departments or just one? The County Manager said all three. That covers all Emergency Services personnel. Chairman McVey said \$1, 254,000.

Commissioner Owen said I don't have a question, just a comment because I think all of those men sitting over there would agree with that casino coming, there's going to be more stress, more time, and more resource needed from all our Emergency Services departments. That's just going to be natural because there's going to be more people coming through this county. They're going to be more things that spread from Danville this way. There's some good things about casinos, but with every casino that you look at, there are negatives that come along with that. I think this Board's going to have to face that reality. If you don't do it now, you're going to be forced to do it, and it's going to really hurt the pocketbook at some time because it's no doubt that our

Department of Emergency Services are going to be more taxed as more people come through this county.

Commissioner Dickerson said I do want to make another comment. As we talked about increasing salaries gentlemen, we need to be thinking about the taxpayers in this county. Who's going to foot this bill ultimately, and the stress that they're already under. They have an ongoing problem too. They're dealing with inflation just like all these gentlemen are, and we do not need to lose sight of the fact that those people have problems at home too. We don't need to be burdening them unnecessarily to the point that they can't pay their property taxes. Chairman McVey said right, and all this can be brought out in our work session.

ELECTIONS RESTROOM FACILITIES:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, I was asked to include this on our agenda because of comments that were made by Board of Election employees during general election that the Board of Commissioners did not fund restrooms for the Board of Elections during the budgeting process. Therefore, they did not have restrooms at the polling sites for the public to visit. So I was asked to put this on the agenda as a discussion item. Chairman McVey said we contacted the Board of Elections over three different times, and asked them to set up a meeting with us. Three times they turned us down one excuse after the other. Then they come back at a later date, I think in March, and said now we can meet. The Chairman said no I'm not meeting now. You couldn't meet with us earlier in the year to talk about the money that you sent back to the Federal Government and to talk about these issues so I didn't worry about it. So that's why we did not meet with the Board of Elections.

Commissioner Massengill asked the County Manager or the Chairman, which voting precincts did not have access to restrooms. Chairman McVey said there is no reason that I can think of that a voting precinct, especially one of these fire stations, where people cannot go in and use the restroom. They could be accessed from a different way from the voters or whatever. I don't know whose rules and regulations this was stating that people could not use the restroom in the fire department. I don't see us having to spend money on port-a-johns. Commissioner Massengill said you have to give us a hint as to which fire departments. Chairman McVey said all of them.

Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Massengill, at Providence Fire Department on Election Day, I was personally told by the Board of Elections official, I've got the name but I won't call it out in the open meeting but if they want to come over and talk we will, that we would not pay for Port-a-johns. They were telling the voters coming in that this Board was to blame for them not having restroom facilities, and they would not let the poll workers go in to those facilities to use the restroom. I got a call from Pelham, and they told me the same thing was going on over there. So it's an actual issue that's been stirred up. Commissioner Massengill asked who were the poll workers told by? Do you know? Commissioner Dickerson said I don't have the name here with me, but I can give it to Mr. Miller. I told you the guy's name. Do you remember off the top of your head? County Manager Miller said Larry Cowan, Board Chair for the Board of Elections.

Commissioner Massengill said he told the workers they could not use the bathrooms?

Commissioner Dickerson said he told the poll workers not to let the elections people go in there. If you were working the polls, you could not go to the restroom in the facilities. They were not letting you in. Commissioner Massengill asked who is they not letting them use facilities? Is it the Fire Departments or the Board of Elections? Commissioner Dickerson said the Board of Elections not the fire departments.

County Manager Miller said just for a little clarification, the state has certain rules surrounding voter interaction within the polling place. So they don't want people trying to influence the way a voter would vote after they entered the polling place. We're all knowledgeable about that 30-foot line or ever how many feet it is that candidates have to remain behind. Once a member of the public moves inside that line, they can no longer solicit for the vote. So that is kind of the issues that from time to time that the Board of Elections runs into, and those are the reasons we've been given. Chairman McVey said the funny thing to me is when we ran in early voting, we were able, anybody there was able to go into the restroom facility at the Board of Elections. They had people standing out there, and you couldn't carry nothing in. We did go in and use that restroom right there, and the same thing as far as I'm concerned could apply to those workers.

Commissioner Dickerson said the gentlemen that I spoke with at Providence was Paul Cross from the Election office that's who told me that. Commissioner Massengill said and he was told by the Elections Board. Commissioner Dickerson said yes sir. Commissioner Massengill said and the reason was? County Manager Miller said I don't know the reason. I'm giving you the regulations behind what they've stated before as to why they needed the affordable facilities present at the voting precincts. It's because of their inability to separate the voters and just to make it crystal clear that nobody is influencing them once they enter into the facility.

Commissioner Massengill said does anybody know if the Board of Elections contacted any of the Fire Chiefs and said how can we work this out so that the voters are over here and the people who want to go to restrooms are here. The County Manager said I'm not sure. At the time, I think that was the recommendation from the Board. It was to try to configure the voting in such a way that you didn't have that possibility. I think the Board asked for a meeting with the Board of Elections to try to figure that out. The Board of Elections was unable to meet with the Board of Commissions for about two months. So the issue just kind of went away.

Commissioner Dickerson said Commissioner McVey, how many times did we offered to set down with the Board of Elections and try to work this out? Was it three times? Chairman McVey said yes, I offered three times or tried to get him to meet with us on three different occasions. One time I think or believe this is right because it's been a while, I believe the Elections Board Director's wife passed away. But the other two times, they just didn't act like Mr. Miller is shaking his head. County Manager Miller said that wasn't the reason. It was a funeral, but it wasn't the Board of Elections Director's wife. Commissioner Dickerson said but multiple times we've tried. Chairman McVey said two or three different times I've tried to get them to come and meet with us because of the amount of COVID that they sent back and about not talking to

anybody else to get any other ideas. They sent quite a bit of money back to the Federal Government. Then I don't know later on Mr. Miller do you know when it was that they sent us another decision. County Manager Miller said they sent us an email on March 15th. We plan to attend the March 21st Commissioners meeting to answer questions the Commissioners may have. Was told 2/2/22 by the County Manager 6:30 was a time for us to come. Is that correct? What valid location? Chairman McVey said so we made an effort to get in touch with them. They want to act like it's just, then it's fine. Commissioner Dickerson said I just wanted to bring this out publicly and on the record since they are trashing us at the polls saying it's our fault. We invited them to come over and try to solve our issues, but they turned us down. What else can we do? Commissioner Massengill said Commissioner Dickerson, I just want to make sure it wasn't any fire departments saying no. County Manager Miller said no. Commissioner Massengill said that's what I wanted to know. That's the point I'm bringing up. Chairman McVey said no, nobody at the Fire Departments. For a fact, I know at Casville at the last election there was a fellow that was let in to go to the restroom.

Commissioner Hall said this has been an ongoing problem. I know I mentioned it before this year and even last year and the year before. Citizens could not use the restrooms at Casville. That's been an issue for several years. We've got to find a way to handle this problem or find a way to hold somebody accountable. Commissioner Massengill said what was the issue at Casville? Commissioner Hall said citizen couldn't use the bathroom. Commissioner Massengill said I mean because of Cassville Fire Department or the Board of Elections? Commissioner Hall said it's always the Board of Elections. Once the Board of Elections are having a voting, they take control. They make up the rules as the go it seems. Chairman McVey said they funny thing to me is that we could go down here at the Board of Elections office. This was during early voting. Commissioner Dickerson said Commissioner McVey, if you remember, they wanted us to pay for two port-a-johns in Yanceyville and shut off anyone using those restrooms as well. Chairman McVey said at the Municipal Building? Commissioner Dickerson said no at the Elections office. That's how ridiculous that conversation was. Chairman McVey said as far as I remember, there was no problem at all using those restrooms. Commissioner Hall said I hope we do get them here at a meeting at some point, and figure out how to resolve it or who to hold responsible.

RECESS:

The Board took a brief recess.

ACTION ITEMS:

SENIOR CENTER GRANT:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, we have the Senior Center Director, Jeannine Everidge here and you have already heard a little bit about the grant. Well pretty much everything about the grant, but what we need the Board to do is accept the grant funding so we can get it into a budget amendment and get it back before the Board.

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A **motion** was made by Commissioner Owen and seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher and **carried unanimously** to accept the grant funding. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR PELHAM INDUSTRIAL PARK FROM EDC:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, you have in your agenda packet a letter from the Economic Development Commission. The letter basically outlines public/private partnerships in the Pelham Industrial Park, the Yanceyville Industrial Park, as well as exploring shell building programs offered by the state and the sale of those industrial park lands at a reasonable price to those willing to enter into an economic development venture with the county. So if it pleases the Board, and the Board would like me to move forward with seeing how those public-private partnerships work with individuals or with entities, I'm happy to do that. I'm happy to look into the shell building program that's offered by the state and recommend to the Board an average cost per acre of land if you'd like. Chairman McVey asked if there were any questions. If there are no questions, what's the pleasure of the Board? County Manager Miller said well I'd like to know if you would like me to proceed with entering into these discussions. I mean there would still be a lot that would need to be done and a lot of actions to be taken by the Board moving forward. But if it pleases the Board, this is just the first step of us entering into these development type projects. Commissioner Massengill asked do you need a motion, and Chairman McVey said yes.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Massengill and seconded by Commissioner Hall and **carried unanimously** to that the County Manager proceed to investigate. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

ANIMAL PROTECTION SOCIETY:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, this evening we have with us, it seems, many members from the Animal Protection Society, and one representative that's going to speak to us. So I'd ask the one representative, and it looks like Mitch Foster to come up to the mic and speak for a few minutes.

My name is Dr. Mitch Foster. I'm on the Board with the Animal Protection Society, which runs the animal shelter here in Yanceyville. I appreciate your time and I understand the quandary that you're in with everybody asking for funds. First I want to tell you a little bit about the shelter, and the fantastic job that they have done. This shelter probably has one of the lowest euthanasia rates, especially for dogs, of any shelter around. Like I said probably in the last six months, we euthanatized less than 5% of the dogs that come into the shelter. That's a stark difference from I reckon what people think of the animal shelters and pounds. We've really, really worked hard to try to improve that image. Most people are afraid to bring an animal to the shelter because they think they are just going to put it to sleep. I can't commend the staff enough for the hard work that they've done to improve that euthanasia rate. That comes at sort of a little bit of a cost. That hard work that they've done definitely has created some issues. Like I said, we've tried to really

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work with fostering animals and finding adoptive agencies throughout the country to move these animals because there are a lot of areas that have better spay/neuter laws. I remember 10 years ago when I found out about us shipping animals up to New York and New Jersey , and I asked why. Where are their dogs and cats? They have stricter spay/neuter laws and differential licensing. So they don't have that problem. What we're coming before you tonight for is to request some funds to help us continue with this. Our shelter has recently along with every shelter in the area and throughout the country, we had COVID hit. When COVID hit everybody started staying home, and they wanted a pet. So there were a lot of them that went to shelters, and they were adopted. Now COVID's getting old, and people are going back to work. So now people that had adopted animals, some of them are taking them back. Then we don't have those resources available for people to adopt them. What we would like to do is we've got two funds that we would like to kind of use this money for. Number one is to set up a spay/neuter program through the shelter to help individuals with low income and also help us spay and neuter some of the dogs that are in the shelter to make them a little bit more adoptable so that we can continue to try to move them out of the shelter. This is a tremendous benefit not only to the animals, but it's the only way we're going to get out of this cycle that we're in. You can't continue to adopt enough animals out to really make this program change. You're going to continue to have more animals come in unless we can do something to cut down on the population. So this funding that we're requesting will really help decrease some of the burden of animals coming to the shelter, and also kind of help the county as well because we'll have less unwanted animals in the area. The other part of the program that we're looking to use some of this funds for is, just like everybody now that inflation has hit and it's hit obviously all the residents of Caswell County, for pet food. We've had multiple people come, and they can't afford to feed their animals nowadays. That's hard, and I know we have citizens that are having problems feeding themselves. So the struggle is difficult for you all with money, but like I said we have had multiple people that have come and requested some dog food or some cat food just to get through. So that's another part that we'd like to be able to use some of this money for, like to help feed some of the animals that owners just can't now. Any questions?

Chairman McVey asked how much are you asking for? Dr. Mitch Foster said \$10,000. I know that again you all have been bombarded with figures, and I know it's hard. Ten thousand dollars is, I'm not going to say a small amount, but that that amount of money, the difference that it could make and hopefully save some animals lives. It would be tremendous. Chairman McVey asked were there any more questions?

Commissioner Oestreicher said when you foster or adopt out an animal, cat or dog I guess, to the new owner, do you include shots and spay and neutering in that? Or is that optional? How does that work? Dr. Mitch Foster said any dog that is adopted is required to be spayed and neutered. People pay a fee to cover that. The shelter, when an animal comes in, automatically provides shots for those animals whether they're adopted or not. Some of them potentially could end up being put to sleep, but any animal that comes in they get their vaccinations. The core

vaccinations which include rabies and other core vaccinations for the dogs and the cats. Commissioner Oestreicher said who does the spay and neuter? Dr. Mitch Foster said we have several veterinarians in the area that have agreed to a real reduced price to try to help the shelter. That price has been pretty much the same. We had a price increase about two years ago. Before that the last price increase was about 10 years ago. So it is a real incentive. We also work with a spay/neuter program out of Greensboro. That's been a struggle lately because just like everywhere else, they don't have staff. So trying to get dogs and cats spayed at some of these local facilities outside of the county, has been a real struggle.

Chairman McVey asked how many dogs and cats do you take in a month that you're talking about having spayed? Dr. Mitch Foster said Susan can probably better answer that. Susan said 30 or more dogs and probably 40-60 cats.

Commissioner Massengill asked how many are adopted out? Susan replied a lot of them are in foster homes now. I wish I had my stats. I didn't think about bringing them. We've had many in foster homes, we have them in boarding kennels because we're trying to save their lives until they do get adopted. That's very costly for us, but it's necessary. We do a lot of rescues. We'll come and get them. We do different breed rescues. Pretty much we'll come get the different breeds. Adoptions are good. Social media has been amazing to get information out there. Our adoptions, we have a few in the county, but mostly are coming from all over the states, Georgia even. The last one was New York, Wisconsin, and Virginia. Those people drive in. I had some guy who wants a dog from California. I can't afford to ship it out there. I can't commend this staff enough for really a 5% euthanasia rate. It's unbelievable. There are no kill shelters in the area, but they are selective. I know there's been other county run shelters that have at times quit taking in pets. We in Caswell have not. We've had other people that have tried to come here, and we've tried to encourage them to know that if you're not a resident from Caswell County then you need to take your dog back to Alamance County. Take them to the shelter there. But they have restrictions where people can't even come in for like a week at a time. So this staff has done an amazing, fantastic job and saved countless lives. Commissioner Massengill said this thing turned red on me so it must want me to shut up. How many animals can you keep in the shelter that you have now. We have 16 stall runs and 4 isolation runs that we are using for dogs right now. Some stalls have two and three dogs in a run just a week that have been vaccinated, spayed, or neutered. They're ready to go. They're ready for rescue or adoption. We also have 48 cat cages or kennels. Some of which have multiple cats in them, and we've got a mom with seven babies. There's just lots of kittens still from kitten season. There're in our bathroom. Commissioner Massengill said he remembers when a worker would fill his truck up with cats and go to New York. [Laughter] Someone in the crowd said Massachusetts, and Mr. Massengill said I thank him for that. We also have two pounds, and ones that don't want no more that are in Canada now.

Chairman McVey said if you got the \$10,000, how many do you anticipate that the ten thousand dollars will cover? One or two hundred dogs. Dr. Foster said probably what you'd be looking at is the spay/neuter park. If you did nothing but the spay/neuter, that averages I'm going to say is

around 100 smaller dogs. The bigger dogs are more and cats are less. But let's just say about a hundred dollars per animal. So yeah at least a hundred animals because I think we're looking at spending some of this money for food as well for those people that just can't afford to feed their pets. Chairman McVey said that was going to be part of his question. Just spaying and neutering or are you planning to split it.

Commissioner Owen said are there any grants that you guys applied for? Dr. Foster said we get multiple funding sources from different grants. Right now I'm looking and we've gotten some grants to improve our facilities lately and we've got another one from the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region that we anticipate. We've kind of made the first one which normally means we get funding for that. Commissioner Massengill asked how much are those? Dr. Foster said I know we got I think it was \$5,000 from the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association to help us renovate part of the facilities in the shelter and for fencing. The \$2,500 this year from them as well, and then the Community Foundation Grant applications was for \$17,000 and the project is \$27,000. So we've asked for part of it from them, and we'll have to come up with the rest somewhere else. So we've asked for \$17,000 from the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region, and the project that we're looking at is a total of \$27,000. So we're trying to find as many resources as we can to help fund things. Commissioner Owen asked how about grants on the state level or let's go beyond that to just private grants? I know there are many private individuals who provide grant money. Dr. Foster said we get a lot of donations from people that realize the hard work of this shelter is doing. I mean our donations have really gone up over the past several years. They're not grants, but we also get a grant from a foundation called the Broker Foundation. I think that's like \$5,000, but we got \$8,000 this year. So there's money out there, and we are actively applying for grant after grant. Sometimes we get lucky; sometimes we don't.

Commissioner Dickerson asked why did you not apply for this during the regular budget cycle? Dr. Foster said well when we applied back in March for the regular budget cycle, we were full, but we weren't as full as we are now. I mean things have really changed in the last six months. Again, all I can say is I don't know if it's COVID, or if people are now all of a sudden just taking their animals back to the shelter, or they're not adopting anymore because they're back working full-time. My theory on that really is we over adopted during COVID. In other words, people came in and kind of helped empty the shelters. Now all of those that have adopted have cats; so it's harder to find new people that want to adopt. So I think there's been a little bit of a difference there. Commissioner Dickerson said how many after-hour calls do you get from people who want you to come out and pick the animals? Dr. Foster said that would go under Animal Control. Commissioner Dickerson said you not tied into that? Dr. Foster said no. We house the animals for the county that Animal Control picks up. But we really don't have anything to do with Animal Control as far as what they pick up or when they pick up.

Commissioner Owen said are you're looking at this or is this something you're looking at every year that you're going to request every year for your budget? The additional \$10,000, is this a

one-time shot? Dr. Foster said right now I would say that I'm hoping it's a one-time shot. I'm hoping that this will greatly make a change in things. Hopefully as time moves forward, new people that have adopted will find some new people that don't have animals and maybe the cycle will change. So it is not something we will anticipate doing year after year now.

Chairman McVey asked County Manager Miller where will the money come from? Out of general fund. County Manager Miller said yes. Commissioner Owen said I'm going to ask you a question, and I know what you're going to tell me already. The money that we relocated back into our fund balance from COVID. Okay, I know what you're thinking. Generally, how much out of that fund that we used do we have left? Just roughly. Commissioner Massengill said wasn't it \$70,000? County Manager Miller said yes, but I think you made an additional appropriation since. No you haven't because you didn't do anything with the Senior Center. So theoretically, there's some, but I want to reiterate to the Board, those are not COVID money anymore. Those are general fund monies. Chairman McVey said but we have \$70,000 of that left. County Manager Miller said you have general funds.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen to give the Animal Protection Society \$10,000.

Chairman McVey said we have a motion and a second to give them \$10,000 is there any more discussion? Commissioner Hall said yes. Mr. Manager what is our policy on off budget items over \$10,000 or greater. County Manager Miller said over \$10,000 you can't vote on it the first time it's discussed. Chairman McVey asked if there were any more questions. Mr. Hall voted aye, but said I'm going to say that I have a problem with agreeing to spend more in the middle of the year after voting on the budget. I think that we should take more time to consider and talk to all of the Departments and contractors about what they think they're going to need. Chairman McVey said and we don't do that. You've mentioned that before. Commissioner Dickerson said I echo what Mr. Hall said. My concern is we keep appropriating off book spending and adding to the obligation of the county

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to give the Animal Protection Society \$10,000. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreich, Massengill, and McVey).

Dr. Mitch Foster said I thank you. I realize how Caswell County funds are. WE will be good steward of the money. Thank you.

COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:

The County Manager said Commissioners, I do have a couple of updates for you. I want you to know that Family Services is applying for a Human Trafficking Commission Grant in the amount of \$86,540. They're also applying for a GCC Victims of Crime Act Competitive Grant. Then Chairman McVey asked if the County Manager could wait until the people exited the meeting because it's hard to hear. County Manager Miller said Commissioners, I want to make you aware that Family Services is applying for a couple grants. The first one is a Human

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Trafficking Commission Grant in the amount of \$86,540, and the second one is the GCC Victims of Crime Act Competitive Grant. They've applied for \$150,000. Neither grants require a county match so I think we're good to go. I don't need any action from the Board because they're requesting the grants. They're applying for the grants. I just want to let you know they're doing that. If they receive the grants, they'll come back in front of you as a Board for your approval and acceptance. Any questions? Commissioner Dickerson said yes, could you elaborate on that second grant? County Manager Miller said it's a Governor's Crime Commission Victims of Crime Act, and it's a competitive grant. So it's a grant where they compete with other jurisdictions. They could be awarded full funding, partial funding, or no funding. Commissioner Dickerson asked how will that money be applied? I'm curious as to what it'll do. County Manager Miller said this is a facilities type grant that will help with the facilities that we have. It also will help with some programming.

I want to let you know that on December 5th that's our next meeting day. On December 5th we'll have a photographer here to take pictures to update the large picture we have downstairs of the Commissioners. Just so you're aware we're going to take pictures that day. Wear your fancy threads.

I also wanted the Board to know that we've had multiple requests from staff to take this coming Wednesday off here in the courthouse. There's a good possibility that we'll be closing the courthouse all together on Wednesday. So if you need anything try to get with myself or Carla tonight or Tuesday. There is a chance that nobody will be at the Historic Courthouse. I'm happy to answer any questions you have or update you on anything you would like updated on.

Commissioner Hall said what's the status of the Economic Developer? County Manager Miller said we've received four applications, maybe six applications, for the Economic Developer. That's the next set of interviews that we plan to conduct. So we should be scheduling those within the next two or two and a half weeks. For the Economic Developer, just as we've done many appointments here lately, were approaching that in a little bit of a different way. We are conducting paneling. So I may be reaching out to a Board member or so to help assist with the panel.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hall: Fellow Commissioners, as you are aware I was asked to attend the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Legislative Goals Conference. I did attend. We had seven categories of goals that were submitted. I won't try to list them all, but one of our goals that we submitted was closely related to agriculture: to support regulations and economic policy that promotes small family farms. So that goal did pass, and it will be moved on. So the next group that we had an interest in was in public education: to support school calendar policies that promote optimal state outcomes and best meet the needs of our local community. That one basically had to do with align local school calendars for Community College calendars. A lot of people around the state are having problems with that. You know students can't get started one

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way or another because the calendars don't jive. Then the last one was in tax and finance: seek legislation that preserves existing local revenue by providing just compensation to counties for property acquired by the state and removed from the ad valorem taxes. That have to do with one of our goals as it relates to the game land and the prisons. So on that particular goal, I got up and I addressed the voting delegates. That one moved on. We had a total of 68 voting delegates, and that one passed 62 to 0. So nobody voted against it, but some of them just didn't vote. That was fine. So that will move them on. Commissioner Massengill asked what were the comments on that Commissioner Hall? Were there comments on that? Commissioner Hall said yes, in the western part of the state, there's a lot of State game land and State owned crop and Federal property. So some of them commented they thought that was a good idea. Commissioner Massengill said we had the same thing here. We answered several calls a year for either fires on the Game land or searches when they lost something. But yet we get nothing out of that particular part of it. Chairman McVey said it's approximate 17,000 acres here in the county and we don't get a dime on it. Commissioner Massengill said right. I've been working at that level for three years now to no avail. Commissioner Hall said I had a private conversation with the Deputy Director of the Association to ask her some legal questions, and she's going to get back with me. One of the questions I asked was could we bill the game land, or the Scouts, Cherokee Scout Reservation, if we have to go in and search for people, put out fires, or do other things because they don't pay any taxes. So I hope I'll get a kind of legal or semi response from the association on that question. That also included EMS because you got people falling out of trees and all of that when they are hunting on the game lands. That's the brief summary. We had 10 federal goals that wouldn't pass their block. There was no comment on them, and it was generally just trying to get more money from the Federal Government and stop unfunded mandates. One of them also had to do a payment in a lieu of taxes on Federal property.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 24-25, 2022 Thanksgiving –County Offices will be closed
- December 2, 2022 Christmas Tree Lighting
- December 3, 2022 Christmas Parade
- December 5, 2022 at 9:00 am Commissioners Meeting

CLOSED SESSION:

A **motion** was made at 8:31 pm by Commissioner Dickerson and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to go into closed session.

Attorney Brian Ferrell said Mr. Chair before you go into roll call voting could you just identify the purpose of the closed session. I believe it's just a personnel item before you this evening in closed session. Mr. Manager will you confirm that. County Manager Miller said that's correct. Chairman McVey said sorry about that. I forgot about it, and getting in a hurry. So if it's

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acceptable just amend the motion to go in a closed session for the purposes of discussing the performance or terms of employment of a public officer.

A **motion** was made at 8:31 pm by Commissioner Dickerson and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to accept the amendment to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6). (Ayes: Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 8:34 pm by Commissioner Massengill and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Rick McVey
Chairman

November 21, 2022

**Caswell Senior Services
P.O. Box 1405
Yanceyville, NC 27379**

Monday November 21, 2022

Caswell Senior Services has just received an award letter regarding a grant for Supportive Services for Housing and Home Improvements. The grant is for \$75,000 and the grant period will be from November 01, 2022 through September 30, 2024. This grant promotes aging in place and aging in communities for senior adults 60+ years of age.

The grant is to assist clients with information and resources that will enable them to obtain housing, retain the housing they have or return to independent housing. Funded service providers have the option of providing this service.

The grant also provides home improvement services as well as security enhancements to the client's home. Some examples of the services that can be provided are...

- Door knobs installed w/reliable lock and key and or dead lock bolts
- Windows fitted with reliable locks
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors installed if not provided by local fire departments

Minor Home Repairs

- Primary bathroom repairs such as sink, tub/shower or commode
- Kitchen sink repair
- Doorway widened
- Broken door or window repaired or replaced
- Shingles and roofing felt replaced (limited)
- Floor, ceiling or wall repair

Mobility improvements

- Grab bars or handrails
- Steps repaired
- Ramps built

Basic household furnishings and inoperable home appliances repair or replacement

- Stove
- Hot water heater
- Refrigerator
- Washing machine
- Heating or cooling unit

We will partner with local (if feasible) businesses to make repairs and improvements and appliance repair.

There will be caps on all services provided.

As soon as we have approval of funds we will begin advertising for these services through radio, newspaper and flyers. We will also need to find available individuals or business who will partner with us to provide said services. Caswell Senior Services will work to ensure that those underserved and unserved in Caswell County have priority to these services. We will assess their situation and discuss with the individual or families what the greatest need is in the event they have multiple needs and we can only address 1 or 2 of those needs due to funding caps.

Caswell Senior Services is proud to be able to provide these much needed services to the senior residents of Caswell County.



**CASWELL COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CASWELL COUNTY JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

November 14th, 2022

Caswell County Board of Commissioners:

At the November Caswell County Economic Development Commission out of lengthy discussion looking at avenues to jump start and enhance development especially in the Pelham Industrial Park the following is a unanimous recommendation from the EDC.

We recommend that the County Commissioners \ Economic Development Department seek out Public\Private partnerships to erect Spec\shell building of varying dimensions within The Pelham Industrial Park to further encourage development. By selling available land at a very reasonable cost to the private developer payable upon sell, lease or rented without interest.

Such development would not only enhance the tax base but would prove to be a great enhancement to the CEAD program\site.

Also, during the discussion, it was noted some sites are still available at the Industrial Park in Yanceyville that should also be considered.

However, the Pelham Park should be the primary focus as this program launches.

Thank You for your consideration as we strive to move our County forward.

Alvin W. Foster
Chairman Caswell County EDC